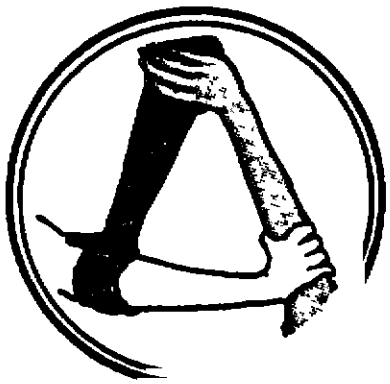

ASSESSING CAMPUS CLIMATE

Feasibility of Developing an Educational Equity Assessment System

CALIFORNIA
POSTSECONDARY
EDUCATION
COMMISSION

Summary

This report concludes a three-year study on the feasibility of developing an educational equity assessment system designed to obtain information on the perceptions of institutional participants about their campus climate In this study, *campus climate* is defined as "the formal and informal environment -- both institutional and community-based -- in which individuals learn, teach, work, and live in a postsecondary setting." The impetus for this study was two-fold (1) the Commission's policy declaration that directs attention to the qualitative dimension of educational equity, and (2) Assembly Bill 4071 (Vasconcellos, 1988), which directed the Commission to investigate the feasibility of developing an educational equity assessment system for California higher education

In June 1990, the Commission published *Toward an Understanding of Campus Climate*, the report of Phase One of this two-part study That report centered on defining and better understanding the nature and complexity of the campus climate concept This second and final report focuses on the process, methodological issues, and educational significance of assessing campus climate

The report is divided into five parts

- Part One discusses the impetuses for the study and describes its two phases,
- Part Two describes the statewide context for the project,
- Part Three examines questions of process that institutions may wish to address in assessing their campus climate,
- Part Four responds to the specific issues of feasibility posed by AB 4017 and discusses several methodological issues surrounding assessment of campus climate, and
- Part Five summarizes important issues of the project and on pages 26-30 offers the Commission's nine conclusions and recommendations for action -- the first seven by postsecondary educational institutions themselves, the eighth by the State's educational leaders, and the ninth by the statewide offices of California's sectors of higher education

In brief, the Commission believes that institutional self-assessment of campus climate is so important in ensuring educational quality and achieving educational equity that it urges progress by the entire higher education community in this direction, and it has agreed to help this institutional progress by distributing to all of California's colleges and universities as soon as possible a resource guide on the assessment of campus climate

The Commission adopted this report at its meeting of January 27, 1992, on recommendation of its Policy Evaluation Committee Additional copies of the report may be obtained from the Publications Office of the Commission at (916) 324-4992

ASSESSING CAMPUS CLIMATE

Feasibility of Developing an Educational Equity Assessment System

The Commission's Second and Final Report to the Legislature in Response to Assembly Bill 4071 (Chapter 690, Statutes of 1988)

CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION
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CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION

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1 *Impetus for the Report*

DISCUSSIONS about the quality of American higher education have multiplied in recent years Myriad national reports have recommended improvements in the outcomes expected from attending college, particularly as those improvements help enable America to compete more successfully in international markets. This concern about outcomes is exacerbated by the rise in the costs of college, which has reduced the opportunity for many students to attend college and is regarded by a number of academic critics as an indicator that higher education has yet to come to grips with issues of institutional efficiency and effectiveness As such, questions continue to be posed by critics and supporters alike about both the outcomes and process of higher education

Not surprisingly, this heightened interest has led to an assessment movement with respect to higher education at the national, state, and institutional levels In particular, this movement has focused on measuring educational efficiency and quality in terms of such quantitative indices of student outcomes as retention and graduation rates, the length of time that it takes students to complete their degree programs, and the percentage of undergraduates who enroll in graduate programs These analyses show the paths that students take through the educational system, and they can identify points on these paths through which the flow of students may be uneven or problematic In these assessments, quality and efficiency become synonymous because they are both measured in quantitative terms In the main, then, these studies provide answers to the questions, "What is the nature of the flow of students through the educational system?" and "Where is the system operating efficiently or inefficiently?"

Seldom do these examinations focus on more intangible aspects of quality, such as "What are the experiences that students encounter in the process of gaining a college education?" and "How do these experiences influence students' flow through the system?" Clearly, assessments that seek to examine those questions require both methodological strategies and processes that are different than those needed to answer questions that are more descriptive in nature Moreover, exploring these questions involves, by definition, listening and giving credence to the voices of those who experience the educational process first hand -- students themselves

Listening to students is especially critical in addressing one of the major issues facing California -- the consistently and continually documented unevenness of the flow through the educational system of women and students from historically underrepresented backgrounds those students from groups that constitute an increasingly larger proportion of the State's population and, therefore, of its future

Many factors contribute to this unevenness of flow, including students' lack of finances, limited academic preparation and motivation, uncertainty about career goals, family obligations, and institutional practices and characteristics Some of these reasons are personal in nature, while others are academically-oriented Understanding these reasons has the potential to influence the flow of students, thereby leading to greater institutional efficiency on the one hand and, on the other, to greater likelihood that the California of tomorrow will be economically competitive and socially viable

Background on the report

Two different but mutually supporting paths led the Commission to conduct its three-year study of institutional factors influencing the flow of students, which has led to this report (1) its own policy declaration in 1988 regarding educational equity, and (2) the passage of Assembly Bill 4071 (Vasconcellos) of 1988

The Commission's policy on educational equity

After a year-long exploration to identify the role the Commission should play in furthering the State's

educational equity goals, in December 1988 the Commission issued its policy statement on educational equity, *The Role of the Commission in Achieving Educational Equity A Declaration of Policy* In that statement, it defined educational equity in both quantitative and qualitative terms With respect to this study, the qualitative definition is most relevant "The goal of educational equity is achieved when pluralism and excellence are equal partners in a quality educational environment, especially with respect to curriculum, teaching, research, and public service " This study of educational environments has been the first of several planned Commission activities to explore the qualitative dimension of educational equity

Assembly Bill 4071

In 1987, the University of California Student Association intensified its interest in the factors that contribute to or detract from an equitable educational environment After conducting an extensive review of research literature, the Association concluded that "differential treatment"was a principal factor related to the uneven flow of students from various racial-ethnic groups and women through the educational system In this context, differential treatment was defined as "a subtle and usually unintended behavior pattern directed toward affirmative action students which serves to affirm and reinforce traditional ethnic and/or gender stereotypes " Based upon its publication *Differential Treatment A Prospectus for Legislative Action* (Knutsen, 1987) and the conclusions that derive from it, the Association sponsored AB 4071, the "Higher Education Equity Assessment Act of 1988," which the Legislature passed and the Governor signed that summer as Chapter 690 of the Statutes of 1988

The Act indicated that California "has the opportunity and the challenge to create the world's first truly healthy multicultural state and society," and to this end it declared not only that "a primary goal of every educational institution should be to ensure an equitable educational environment for each student, regardless of gender or race" but that "a primary measure of the effectiveness of a postsecondary education institution should be its success in providing an equitable educational environment for its students "

To help California's colleges and universities provide such an environment, the Act directed the Postsecondary Education Commission to determine the feasibility of "a program of systematic longitudinal data collection" that would focus on "the relative significance of various factors that contribute or detract from an equitable and high quality educational experience, particularly by women and students from historically underrepresented groups Of special importance are factors influencing the perceived level of equity being provided in students' educational experiences" -- most particularly, "institutional policies, programs, practices, attitudes, and expectations that are conducive to, and serve to encourage the achievement of appropriate educational goals by all students at the institutions, in particular women and students from minority groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education "

The complete text of AB 4071 appears in Appendix A, but three elements warrant emphasis here because the Act directed the Commission to also determine the feasibility of these three possible characteristics of the program

1 Using surveys of students and faculty as well as exit interviews of students who were leaving the institution before completing their degree program in order to assess the relative significance of such factors,

2 Linking findings from the program with such existing data as applicant, admissions, and retention statistics in order to better understand the causes of student attrition and the likely effects of changes in institutional policies and practices, and

3 Developing the programs so that data "will be comparable between the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges "

The Commission labeled the environmental factors that may contribute or detract from student progress as the "campus climate" - a concept borrowed in part from the work of Bernice Sandler and her colleagues at the Project on the Status and Education of Women For the purpose of this project, the Commission defined *campus climate* as "the formal and informal environment - both institutional and community-based -- in which individuals learn, teach, work, and live in a postsecondary setting "

As such, campus climate is a collage of the interpersonal and group dynamics that comprise the experience of participants in a collegiate setting

Purposes and organization of the study

Initially, the Commission identified three purposes for its study of campus climates and their assessment, but based on its activities since the start of the project, it has added a fourth one

1 To communicate to institutions, systemwide offices, and State policy makers the importance of understanding campus climate for the achievement of statewide educational equity goals

2 To encourage the development of institutional, systemwide, and statewide strategies to assess campus climate, with particular emphasis on promoting institutional self-assessment in this area

3 To recommend policies and strategies to the State that it could implement to promote and support the development of campus climate assessments as part of the movement toward greater institutional accountability

4 To assist campuses interested in engaging in an institutional self-assessment process with respect to their campus climate

To organize the study, the Commission divided it into two phases

Phase One Framing a view of the campus climate

The first phase centered on defining and better understanding the nature and complexity of campus climates By holding focus-group discussions on eight campuses throughout California, the Commission sought to identify and describe the major components of this concept and its relationship to students' perceptions and decisions with respect to their educational experiences and career choices Among the factors identified as salient to these perceptions and decisions were

- Faculty composition and philosophy,
- Student-faculty interaction,
- Curriculum content and pedagogical approaches,
- Academic support service availability,
- Student life,
- Interactions among students,
- Campus image,
- Student expectation of the campus prior to enrollment,
- Campus leaders' philosophy and implementing practices, and,
- Campus-local community interaction

The Commission adopted its report from the first phase of the study, *Toward an Understanding of Campus Climate*, in June 1990 That report concluded with a plan for conducting the second phase of this study, which was designed to address the methodological issues raised by AB 4071

Phase Two Developing methods for implementing an educational equity assessment system

In this second phase, the Commission has sought to achieve the following five objectives.

- To respond to the issues posed in AB 4071 by providing recommendations to the Governor and Legislature about the State's role with respect to the feasibility of designing and implementing an educational equity assessment system,
- To encourage academic institutions to engage in a self-assessment process with respect to the issue of campus climate,
- To facilitate the institutional self-assessment process by providing a resource guide to colleges and universities that describes the variety of methodological approaches that could comprise an assessment system and the manner in which those approaches have been utilized on various campuses,
- To develop a pool of field-tested survey items that campuses can use, if they wish, to further their institutional self-assessment activities, and,
- To identify means by which to examine the empirical relationships between elements of the campus climate and quantitative indices of educational equity, such as rates of baccalaureate degree attainment and graduate school completion

The present document seeks to accomplish those goals by focusing principally on the methodological issues surrounding assessment of campus climate, but it also functions as the concluding report for the entire project As such, its goal is to connect the key descriptive and conceptual aspects of Phase One of the project to the insights, conclusions, and recommendations gained during Phase Two

In summary, this report jointly considers two educational challenges (1) institutional assessment, particularly of a qualitative nature, and (2) the achievement of educational equity In *Toward an Understanding of Campus Climate*, the Commission briefly discussed the unusual nature of the study that led to both that document and this report That statement bears repeating here

> By its very nature, this study is unlike most Commission work Its subject matter is difficult to grasp analytically, it addresses the core of institutional receptivity and inclusiveness, and its methodological approaches are exploratory and designed to yield qualitative rather than quantitative information Moreover, the project seeks primarily to determine only the feasibility of developing assessment mechanisms that have the potential to lead to greater understanding with respect to this query While these differences make this project intriguing, anxiety-provoking, and uncomfortable for the Commission, California's educational systems, and its colleges and universities, little doubt exists as to the importance to the future of the State of addressing the central focus of the study (p 2)

In concluding the second and final phase of the study, the Commission has become increasingly convinced of the veracity of that statement. It would only add that over the last three years the educational community has expanded its interest in and concern about this topic

The study's advisory committee

At the inception of this study, the Commission assembled a committee to provide advice on the design and implementation of this study Composed of representatives from the educational system, student associations, and students, this committee has provided invaluable assistance to Commission staff in conducting this study The members of this committee are

- Delores Austin, Center for Academic Skills and Enrichment, University of California, Santa Barbara (formerly)
- Charles Carter, Student Activities, California State University, Chico
- Rita Cepeda, Academic Affairs, California Community Colleges
- Jeff Chang, Legislative Unit, California State Student Association
- June Cooper, Student Affairs, California State University, Long Beach (formerly)
- Sonya Dugas, student, San Francisco State University
- Julie Gordon, Academic Affairs, University of California
- David Hawkins, Legislative Unit, California State Student Association (formerly)
- Lloyd Monserratt, student, University of California, Los Angeles
- William Moore, Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (formerly)
- Liz Quesada, student, California State University, Los Angeles (formerly)
- Patricia Romero, Student Academic Services, University of California
- Jacqueline Ross, Office of Relations with Schools, University of California, Davis
- Angel Sanchez, Analytical Studies, California State University
- Sharon Skog, California Postsecondary Education Commission (formerly)
- Cindra Smith, Community College League of California
- Don Stelluto, student, California State University, Fullerton (formerly)
- Michele Woods-Jones, Business and Administrative Services, University of California, Berkeley (formerly)
- Elaine Yamaguchi, University Affairs, University of California Student Association

- Juan Ynguez, Residential Education, Stanford University (formerly)

Organization of the report

Following this first part of this five-part report, Part Two describes the context of, and influences on, the Commission's study of campus climates and their assessment It explores the importance of California's educational system in meeting the challenges and opportunities facing the State as California becomes increasingly diverse and internationalized It describes three recent studies at California universities that explored the assessment of campus climate and contributed to the Commission's understanding of this topic and its assessment And it discusses the impact on California colleges and universities of the focus on diversity and its assessment that the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) -- the regional accrediting association for California -- has adopted in its accrediting procedures

Part Three then explores the significance of the process of assessing campus climates and the central issues that institutions should address in assessing their climate

Part Four answers the specific questions posed in AB 4071 regarding the feasibility of an on-going assessment of campus climates in California postsecondary educational institutions, particularly its public colleges and universities It then outlines various issues surrounding the assessment of campus climates, including the methodological approaches that might be used in developing an educational equity assessment system

Finally, Part Five offers recommendations to the Governor, Legislature, and California's educational systems concerning the assessment of campus climate and then describes the Commission's plans with respect to continued work on this topic

2 *Context of the Study*

IN THIS PART of the report, the Commission discusses three major influences that have separately and collectively created the context for the document: (1) the role of California's educational system in preparing students to live in the society of tomorrow -- a society characterized by a multiplicity of cultural differences, (2) the initiative of three major California universities in undertaking studies of their campus climate, and (3) the increased emphasis on educational diversity by the Western Association of Colleges and Schools -- the regional accrediting agency for California

Education's role in preparing students for the future

Most reports about the future of California begin by describing the dramatic demographic changes that the State is experiencing They generally continue with the statement that, by the year 2000, no single racial-ethnic group will constitute a majority of the State's population and, indeed, that this fact is presently the case in California's elementary schools today

The implications of this population shift for the State's educational system is immense On the one hand, many students will arrive at educational institutions with experiences, expectations, and skill levels that are at variance from those familiar to the institutions No longer is higher education in California or elsewhere in the country for the privileged classes alone, its democratization began over a century ago with the Morrill Act, was reinforced by the G I Bill of Rights, and has continued by providing enhanced opportunities for women and students from low-income families and from various racial-ethnic communities Despite this democratization, however, proportionally more economically well-off students enroll and succeed in college than low-income students, as do more Asian and White than Black, Latino, or Native American students

The factors that contribute to these differing patterns of performance continue to be explored, but evidence is mounting that influences other than academic preparation may account for much of this variation One consequence is that colleges and universities must adapt in myriad ways to their changing student bodies if they are to be efficient and effective in preparing students to contribute to the future of California

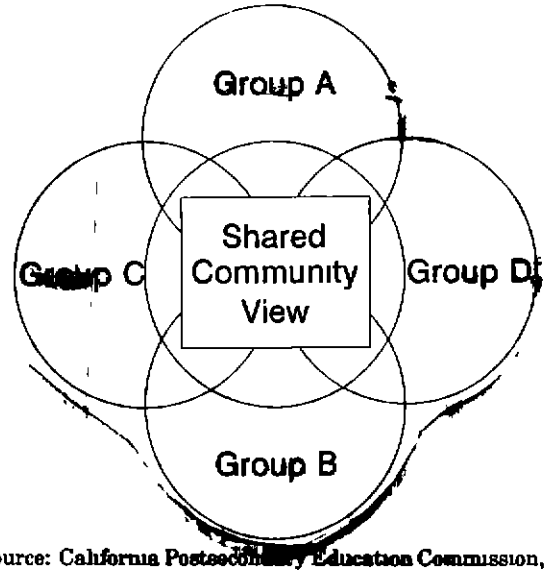
On the other hand, the changing demographics of the State and the nation along with the internationalization of the world point to an even more profound implication for the educational system Not only is the student body changing, but the skills, competencies, knowledge, and attitudes that students are expected to learn in college must necessarily also be different, since these students will enter a work environment, live in communities, and interact in situations that are decidedly heterogeneous -- heterogeneous in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender as well as family and life circumstances

Higher education's challenge is to prepare its graduates to live in this multicultural world Quoting again from the Commission's declaration of policy on educational equity (1988, p 2)

> California is part of a world that is becoming increasingly international, interdependent, and multicultural Education provides opportunities for all Californians to enhance the quality of life within its borders and its relations with neighboring nations through learning about diverse cultures and interacting with individuals of various backgrounds and experiences

Education must help students create a society that has been variously described as "interactively pluralistic," "Stage 3," or, in the Commission's phrase from Phase One of this study, "synergistic " In *Toward an Understanding of Campus Climate*, the Commission presented a schematic representation of a synergistic society that is repeated in the dis play on page 8 in order to provide the context for the

Schematic Diagram of a "Synergistic" Society



Source: California Postsecondary Education Commission, 1990, p. 11

remainder of the report Formally defined, *synergistic* means "cooperative action of discrete agencies such that the total effect is greater than the sum of the two effects taken independently " The outer four circles -- to which many could be added -- represent groups within the California population that are distinguished by specific socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, linguistic, or gender characteristics Each of these groups is unique in some sense and each has a culture that is group-specific In this figure, these circles -- and by implication the cultures -- remain whole, but aspects of each group's culture also becomes part of a shared community view

The undergirdings of this shared community view are

1 Awareness of and appreciation and respect for the values and strengths that all individuals, groups, cultures, and perspectives contribute to the State,

2 A recognition of the need to learn about the cultures that comprise the State in order that Californians can work, live, and participate together in developing a healthy and productive society,

3 A commitment to identify similarities among groups and across issue areas in order to move the State forward on an agreed upon common agenda, and

4 In the words of AB 4071, a concerted effort to gain "a personal familiarity, sensitization, and comfort" with all the cultures in our society

Implications for campuses

The challenges for California's colleges and universities in incorporating into their fabric the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that students will need if they are to create such a society have been identified by the Chancellor's Council on Affirmative Action and Diversity at the University of California, Irvine, in its statement, *Toward an Understanding of "Valuing Diversity"* (1991, p 1-2)

The Council believes that institutions must

- Develop a "philosophy which espouses the achievement and nurturing of a dynamic educational environment in which the diverse groups within American society and the world community are respected and their presence and active participation are facilitated, with the goal of creating an academic community characterized by increased mutual understanding and more expansive intellectual inquiry "
- Be willing to challenge "the implicit value placed on 'sameness' It requires dynamic collaboration and active engagement with issues of difference, where being different is not seen as 'deficient,' 'inferior,' or 'dysfunctional ' It can be achieved and sustained only by collective and individual actions to change an academic and campus climate which has been shaped and bound by traditions, values, and attitudes that often are unexpressed and unrecognized "
- Engage in a "transformation of the total educational environment from a singular and dominant view of reality to a situation in which knowledge is seen as being more expansive and inclusive of alternate world views, and in which a multiplicity of views necessarily co-exist within a pluralistic society "
- And establish an approach that "is qualitative, proactive, and opportunity focused "

If colleges and universities are to progress in the direction postulated by the Irvine Council and if they are to be prepare students to live, work, contribute, and participate in a synergistic society, they will

need to incorporate strategies for assessing their campus environment into their institutional change processes

Recent studies of campus climate at California universities

In the past four years, both Stanford University and the University of California, Berkeley, have conducted major studies of their campus climates, and UCLA is currently completing a similar analysis These institutions are not alone in undertaking such studies, but because they were co-temporal with the Commission's own project and were comprehensive campus-wide efforts, they form excellent examples of how institutions can assess their campus climate

Stanford's University Committee on Minority Issues

At Stanford, President Donald Kennedy established the University Committee on Minority Issues in 1987 for four reasons

1 The rise of intolerance on college campuses throughout the nation,

2 The desire to create a university community that is "interactively pluralistic" and values diversity,

3 A series of racially related incidents on campus, and

4 The demand of the Rainbow Agenda -- a coalition of Asian, Black, Latino, and Native American students -- that the Stanford community explore their concerns with respect to racism, intolerance, and harassment

Composed of faculty, students, staff, and individuals from outside the Stanford community, the committee's charge was

> to assess the institutional environment of people of color at Stanford and shall collaborate with legislative bodies and executive officers to move the University with wisdom, conviction, and speed further toward policies and practices that implement the University's commitment to a genuinely pluralistic community The goal of this committee is to promote a University environment in which all members have equal opportunity to develop full human potential -- an environment in which respect, mutual regard for cultural differences and full participation and partnership are the norm (Stanford University, 1989, p 235)

Berkeley's Diversity Project and Commission on Responses to a Changing Student Body

During the 1980s, the University of California, Berkeley, made such significant strides with respect to its diversity goals that no single racial-ethnic group constituted a majority of the student body Despite these gains, Chancellor Heyman decided that it was time to examine critically the ways in which the institution needed to adjust in order to accommodate the changes brought on by the more diverse student clientele because the campus was approaching a point of real crisis in terms of intolerance, resentment, and lack of community Among the Chancellor's actions were

- The establishment of a Commission on Responses to a Changing Student Body that conducted a major survey of the Berkeley campus along the lines of the Stanford study,
- The development of the Diversity Project -- a study conducted through the campus's Institute for the Study of Social Change to gather information on the ways in which diversity was experienced by Berkeley's students and ways in which the administration or faculty could enhance the quality of campus life,
- The establishment of the new American Studies and American Cultures courses, and,
- The implementation of the Multi-Cultural Action Team and the DARE Project

UCLA's Council on Diversity

While the 1980s saw the UCLA campus become increasingly more diverse with respect to its racial-ethnic composition, it also gained richness in terms of the gender, sexual orientation, and levels of physical challenge of its institutional participants This greater diversity resulted in benefits as well as ten-

sions on the campus To respond to these challenges, the administration established a Council on Diversity to identify and implement ways in which the UCLA environment could be strengthened to accommodate the enhanced diversity of the campus community

In Fall 1989, the Council on Diversity, composed of broad representation of undergraduate and graduate students, administrators, faculty, and staff, decided to undertake a study that would focus the campus' attention on issues of multiculturalism and community The Council selected the Higher Education Research Institute and the Institute for Social Science Research to conduct the study, which has yet to be completed

Details about the processes and methodological approaches used by the three universities in assessing their campus climate are discussed in Parts Three and Four of this report, and Appendix B to the report summarizes the findings from the Stanford and Berkeley studies

Attention to diversity by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Because the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) believes that diversity is an essential element of academic quality and that quality is the basis for accreditation, it placed an emphasis on diversity when it revised its *Handbook of Accreditation* in 1988 and stated its expectation that all institutions in the region accredited by it should make progress toward becoming multi-cultural and multi-racial institutions. Thus it incorporated specific reference to diversity within several of its accrediting standards -- in particular, those on Institutional Integrity, Educational Programs, Faculty and Staff, and Student Services and the Co-Curriculum It also recommended that institutions, as part of their self-study, review information available with respect to progress in this area Since that time, all Senior Commission visiting teams have examined institutions' efforts to create learning environments in which knowledge of, and experiences with, individuals, ideas, and societies spanning the entire spectrum of racial-ethnic groups are becoming part of the institutional fabric.

It is anticipated that the leverage offered by the voluntary process of accreditation will continue to provide a springboard for enhanced attention to the assessment of campus climate throughout California For example, as part of its focus on diversity, the Senior Commission of WASC is developing materials to both encourage campuses to become introspective about the topic and assist them in doing so Commissioners and staff of the Postsecondary Education Commission has been actively involved in this process, resulting in a productive exchange of information between the two organizations CPEC's work in this area has gained greater visibility and enrichment through the discussions sponsored by WASC, while WASC has benefited from CPEC's activities In particular, CPEC's involvement with the WASC project has led CPEC to recognize the importance of the processes that institutions develop in order to assess their campus climates -- the subject of the next section of this report

3 *The Assessment Process*

BY DEFINITION, assessment is an introspective, exposing, and vulnerable act, whether of an individual or an institution While this vulnerability may be axiomatic in general, it is especially true when the topic of the assessment goes to the core of institutional receptivity, inclusiveness, and effectiveness -- principles to which academic institutions subscribe and value To explore the extent to which the programs, policies, practices, and attitudes of a college or university support these principles through its actions, then, is a vulnerable and often politically charged risk, particularly in California with respect to issues of educational equity Given this risk, a reasonable question is "Why should a campus assess its climate?"

Institutional benefits from assessing campus climate

A well-designed and implemented examination of the perceptions of individuals within a campus environment should reap significant institutional benefits Among them

1 It provides an occasion to discuss often unacknowledged and unrecognized issues Unless these issues become articulated in a way that actively engages faculty, staff, and administrators as well as students, the chances of developing academic environments that are adaptive to future student populations is minimal Additionally, the discussions that occur initially as part of the assessment process and later after the findings are presented offer an opportunity to build a shared vocabulary and a means by which to discuss institutionally appropriate actions, albeit not necessarily to agree on them

2 An assessment of campus climate provides a mechanism for shifting discussions from idiosyncratic instances to collective appraisals of institutional life. In this way, campus experiences can be understood in such a way that institutional decision makers can differentiate between singular, isolated, and transitory incidents and perceptions -- possibly requiring only personal attention -- and common, recurrent, and consistent perceptions that may be widespread throughout the fabric of the institution

3 Because the campus climate clearly influences students' academic performance and the decisions they make about their educational and career options, information about campus climate has the potential to enhance institutional effectiveness and efficiency in terms of such student flow measures as increased retention and graduation rates

4 Assessments of campus climate can lead to an identification of strengths and weaknesses such that institutional decision makers can

- Identify those perceptions that can be institutionally affected,
- Determine which institutional programs, policies, and practices are enhancing or delaying the campus' achievement of its goals -- particularly that of educational equity, and,
- Prioritize the actions that the institution should initiate and continue in order to meet those goals

As well, such assessments will probably identify positive aspects of the environment that were previously obscured from view and of which the institution can be justifiably proud

5 A multi-year cyclical system of assessments can provide longitudinal information on the effectiveness of specific, planned interventions designed to achieve institutional goals such as educational equity as well as identify unplanned institutional changes that may affect the attainment of those goals

6 As stated earlier, campus climate touches the core of an institution's receptivity and inclusiveness, particularly as it relates to educational equity Given the changing demographics of the

United States, every American campus will need to meet the challenges that more diverse student populations will present Ostrich-like behavior will not suffice All institutions will have to come to terms in new ways with issues of institutional inclusiveness Assessment of campus climate offers the opportunity to be one step ahead in responding to that eventual challenge

7 Assessing campus climate on a regular basis should allow decision makers to act before major and embarrassing crises occur on campus In this way, assessments are much like a medical doctor taking a patient's temperature and measuring other vital signs during a check-up Just as that diagnostic act can lead the physician to identify the patient's level of health and, if necessary, prescribe treatment before an illness becomes acute, so institutional diagnostic assessment procedures may prevent institutional crisis

8 Finally, but by no means least important, better understanding the climate of a campus and the influence that it has on the achievement of the goal of educational equity ought to enhance the capacity and skills of all institutional members to participate in the increasingly multicultural, complex world that exists beyond the campus

Institutional risks associated with assessing campus climate

Several potential risks do exist in assessing campus climate

1 Undoubtedly, an assessment will either reveal for the first time or confirm existing perceptions that certain aspects of an institution's climate detract from its achievement of its educational goals, including that of equity Depending upon the nature and severity of those aspects, that identification can create or intensify divisiveness on the campus Indeed, when the representatives of one institution in the Commission's study were offered a written summary of the focus group interviews conducted on their campus, they declined the offer because they were unsure that the information would remain confidential once received at the institution and concerned that its disclosure could exacerbate the campus' powder-keg atmosphere

2 The potential for public relations problems exists Careless and insensitive disclosures of information, particularly through local media, of findings that indicate the institution is less welcoming, supportive, and hospitable than intended or anticipated can evoke a temporary firestorm for the campus, decelerate efforts to bring about positive change, and fuel long-term divisiveness on issues that until then may have been only controversial

3 Funds for developing and implementing an assessment system may be in short supply, depending upon decisions about its complexity, scope, and methodology Examples later in this section will discuss costs in some detail, but in times of fiscal constraint such as the present, resource considerations obviously take on particular significance

Importance of the assessment process

The potential risks involved make the processes that an institution uses to conduct a campus climate assessment as significant as the results Among the many reasons for this fact are these

1 The capacity of an institution to develop a sense of "psychological ownership" among its many members and constituencies about an assessment of campus climate can defuse its potential divisiveness, particularly if the assessment is seen as on-going and "formative" rather than one-time and "summative " The development of this sense of ownership can be premised on an acknowledgement that most, if not all, campuses are less intellectually and socially diverse than they would wish to be, and that discomfort is a natural part of the change process rather than an emotion to be feared Moreover, the assessment can identify the specific ways in which the campus needs to change in order to reach its educational goals, including equity -- a critical step in making progress In this way, the potential for divisiveness may be minimized as those involved have a stake in the end product

2 The assessment process can focus energy and thought within an academic community on its climate -- a part of the educational enterprise that seldom holds institutional constituencies' attention for long unless a crisis is brewing

3 Profound individual and collective insights often emerge from the assessment process For example, one faculty member who participated in the field test of the Commission's surveys reported that he began to think about the composition of his classes in different ways than he had previously As such, he examined records to ascertain if his assignment of course grades was gender related -- an action that resulted in greater knowledge about his own behavior as it relates to gender issues What was true for him may be true for institutional self-knowledge at large

4 Presumably, this greater insight -- both personal and institutional -- is the foundation for enhanced progress with respect to educational equity goals If the process leads to greater understanding of the ways in which the campus is experienced by students, faculty, and staff from backgrounds historically underrepresented in postsecondary education, and if they perceive their experiences as detrimental, then the institution is in a far better position to change the practices, attitudes, and behaviors that lead to those perceptions

Processes of institutional assessment

No one ideal process exists for assessing campus climate Rather, each institution must determine the appropriate process for it, based on its context, mission, goals, and traditional prerogatives However, institutions that are interested in assessing their climates can learn from the lessons of others As such, the experiences of Stanford, Berkeley, and UCLA provide examples of the variety of processes that institutions can use and that illustrate the importance of process as discussed above

The Stanford process

As mentioned earlier, Stanford's president and provost established the University Committee on Minority Issues in 1987 in order to "promote a University environment in which all members have equal opportunity to develop full human potential an environment in which respect, mutual regard for cultural differences and full participation and partnership are the norm "

To accomplish that goal, President Kennedy directed the Committee to

- Set priorities for studying the myriad issues surrounding diversity on the campus,
- Make findings about these issues;
- Identify University policies and practices which might be in need of change,
- Consult with relevant and appropriate institutional bodies, and,
- Make recommendations to the President

President Kennedy designated the Provost's Office as the administrative locus for the Committee's work

The Committee decided that it wished to explore the following topics by surveying its population of students, faculty, and staff.

- Curriculum, including availability of courses focusing on the total range of racial and ethnic diversity within the United States and incorporation within existing courses of diverse perspectives,
- Faculty, including composition, retention and career development of faculty members from diverse backgrounds, and faculty opinions about students and other faculty members from across the spectrum of racial-ethnic groups,
- Movement of students through Stanford, including issues of admissions, financial aid, retention, and graduation,
- Student life, including race relations, social interaction, racism, residential life, ethnic student community centers, and feeling of community, and
- Staff, including composition, education/training, inclusiveness, institutional racism, marginalization, and accountability

The Committee then contracted with SRI International (formerly the Stanford Research Institute) in

Menlo Park to design and analyze three surveys (1) a student survey responded to by 1,316 undergraduates, (2) a faculty survey completed by 210 professors, and (3) a staff survey returned by 1,297 members of the non-professorial staff. In addition, the Committee hired Pacific Management Services to conduct individual interviews with 200 students

The analyses of these data provided a comprehensive picture of life at Stanford for students, faculty, and staff Because SRI International conducted the analyses separately for each major racial-ethnic group on campus, the picture that emerged was beneficial in identifying common and unique perceptual patterns and behaviors based on racial and ethnic similarities and differences

In March 1989, the Committee released its final report, which contained a series of far-reaching recommendations on the topics enumerated above Following its distribution to the campus community and after much discussion, consensus emerged about most of the report's recommendations President Kennedy then established the University Committee on the Status of Multiracial Affairs which, in concert with appropriate institutional offices, committees, and the Academic Senate, is responsible for implementing the recommendations and monitoring the movement of the Stanford community toward greater interactive pluralism

The *Berkeley process*

At the University of California, Berkeley, Chancellor Heyman took a two-pronged approach to examine the ways the campus needed to adjust to its increasingly diverse student clientele He established a Commission on Responses to a Changing Student Body that conducted a major survey of the Berkeley campus along the lines of the Stanford study, and he proposed that Berkeley's Institute for the Study of Social Change undertake the "Diversity Project" -- a study by means of focus groups about the ways Berkeley's students experienced diversity and ways in which the administration and faculty could enhance the quality of campus life A major strength of the Institute was the diversity of its staff -- an attribute that provided flexibility in the design of the study and an invaluable asset in the conduct of the project

The Diversity Project created two types of focus groups

1 A homogeneous group of four to five students, with a facilitator from the same racial-ethnic group The discussions in these focus groups centered on
   - Prior expectations and early entry to student life,
   - Study patterns, social affiliations, and patterns of friendships,
   - Experiences of, or attitudes toward, the concept of racism, especially with respect to the use of admissions policy to further campus diversity, and,
   - Suggestions on ways to improve the campus climate, particularly with respect to enhancing the experience of diversity
2 A heterogeneous group of seven to eight students, with a facilitator selected from the Institute's research team Discussions in these focus groups centered on
   - Ways in which students "experience ethnic, racial, and cultural exchange",
   - The saliency of diversity to students' everyday lives, and,
   - The relevancy of racism to students' experiences

By design, the analyses were qualitative, with the research team seeking commonalities and differences in the attitudes and behaviors among and between students characterized along racial-ethnic dimensions All research team members reviewed the focus group transcripts, which furthered the objectivity of their analysis

The Institute for the Study of Social Change published *The Diversity Project An Interim Report to the Chancellor* in June 1990 This report, along with the report from the Commission on Responses to a Changing Student Body that was published the same year, presented a series of short-term and long-reaching policy implications and recommendations to the Chancellor These implications and recommendations have been discussed widely in the University community, and will continue to be dis-

cussed as it seeks to respond positively to the diversity that is now the Berkeley campus

The UCLA process

Chancellor Young established the Council on Diversity late in 1989 to identify and implement ways that UCLA could accommodate its increased diversity The members of the Council -- undergraduate and graduate students, administrators, faculty members, and staff members chose UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute and Institute for Social Science Research to conduct the study

The researchers began with four assumptions that are serving to guide the study

1 UCLA contributes to the educational, cultural, and social needs of California,

2 The foundation exists at UCLA to create a climate of intellectual and personal growth for all members of its community and a model for the State and nation,

3 Although more diverse with respect to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and disability than previously, the diversity creates challenges for UCLA These challenges must be acknowledged and institutional accomplishments celebrated

4 In order to address the challenges and improve the climate for diversity, UCLA should engage in an on-going self-assessment and critical evaluation process

Because of the desire to generate a sense of involvement and ownership in the study among all campus participants, the Council established three tasks forces, each representing one of the major constituent groups of the university -- students, faculty, and staff Throughout the study, these task forces have provided invaluable assistance to the research team by

- Identifying individuals to participate in the study,
- Assisting in the design of the study, and,
- Interpreting the results

When UCLA's study is completed, it is anticipated that the recommendations on which there is consensus will be implemented on the campus.

Summary

To focus attention on the importance of assessing campus climate and to create campuswide psychological ownership of the assessment, institutions should recognize the sensibilities and sensitivities that the assessment process will engender From that realization, institutions should develop a process based upon the answers to the following questions and others that will subsequently emerge.

1 Under whose auspices should the assessment be conducted?

2 What constituencies should be involved in designing the assessment system -- students, faculty, administrators, staff, and alumni? What form should their involvement take?

3 Who should select the individuals to design the assessment system?

4 Who should be selected to coordinate, or direct, the assessment?

5 What will be the institutional resources and budget available for this assessment?

6 What is the timeline for the assessment?

7 What aspects of the campus climate should be assessed?

8 Will there be a guarantee of confidentiality to the participants and, if so, how will it be assured?

9 How and to whom should the results be communicated?

10 Whose responsibility will it be to respond to the results?

11 What mechanisms will be established to monitor any interventions that are initiated in order to modify the campus climate, if such changes are determined to be necessary?

The next part of this report will discuss the methodological issues that emerge once these questions have been answered

4 *Issues of Feasibility and Methodology*

THIS PART of the report is divided into four sections that respond to the specific questions posed by Assembly Bill 4071 as well as discussion of several important methodological issues surrounding the assessment of campus climate

Feasibility of assessing campus climate

Through AB 4071, the Legislature directed the Commission to determine the feasibility of developing a program of systematic longitudinal data collection "focusing on the relative significance of various factors that contribute to or detract from an equitable and high quality educational experience, particularly by women and students from historically underrepresented groups " The Commission summarized these various factors as elements in what it labeled "campus climate," and during 1989 and 1990 it tested the feasibility of a data collection program that focused on the perceptions of students, faculty, and staff regarding the campus climate of their institution

The Commission took this "perceptual" approach because of extensive evidence from the behavioral sciences that the most important factor affecting human behavior of any kind -- including the decisions of students to continue their education or else drop out before completing their program -- is not the "objective reality" in which human beings find themselves but instead their *perception* or *interpretation* of that reality This fact is so important that it deserves emphasis *Individuals make decisions on the basis of their perceptions and seldom on the grounds of objective reality that can be verified and validated by scientific analysis* It is not so much the "objective" or "actual" characteristics of a college or university that affect its students' attitudes towards it as it is their own interpretation of these characteristics -- their own views of its quality or value or worth or fairness

The Commission helped facilitate "focus group" meetings to discuss such perceptions at eight California colleges and universities -- the Davis and Irvine campuses of the University of California, the Northridge and San Francisco campuses of the California State University, Butte College and Southwestern College among the California Community Colleges, and Occidental College and the University of Southern California as representatives of the State's independent institutions In June 1990, the Commission published the results of that project in *Toward an Understanding of Campus Climate*, in which it concluded (p 30)

> It is feasible to describe campus climate and identify the factors that participants perceive as contributing to or detracting from their educational achievement

Since then, similar studies by Stanford, Berkeley, and UCLA have also demonstrated the feasibility of this approach of using the perceptions of the individuals who learn, teach, work, and live in a college or university environment as the lens for assessing its climate The multiplicity of their perceptions forms a picture of the campus climate as experienced by its members and thus as it affects their lives If our goal is to understand the reactions of these members to their environment and to improve that environment, it follows that knowledge of individual and collective perceptions is the key to that understanding and improvement

Feasibility of developing an assessment system involving several methodologies

AB 4071 posed a more specific issue with respect to the feasibility of developing "a program of systematic longitudinal data collection" using various methodologies, including surveys and exit interviews The Commission's own experience during the first phase of this project and the experience of

Stanford, Berkeley, and UCLA indicate that it is feasible to develop a multi-method system to assess campus climate Indeed, the complexity and significance of campus climate virtually dictates such a system -- one with two different, albeit related, characteristics (1) gathering information more than one time, and (2) through a variety of information-gathering approaches For the sake of clarity, the following paragraphs discuss these two characteristics separately

The longitudinal nature of an assessment system

A college or university is a dynamic environment, and participants' perceptions of that environment will obviously change over time Because of this "moving target" aspect, a data collection system designed to assess campus climate ought to be longitudinal, especially in California's institutions where student bodies are in a state of unprecedented dynamism, particularly with regard to their racial-ethnic composition

Moreover, as discussed in the previous part of this report, one of the major benefits in assessing campus climate is the gathering of information to determine the effectiveness of planned interventions designed to develop environments that contribute to the achievement of institutional goals such as educational equity Making those determinations involves collecting information on participants' perceptions at more than one point in time Building into an institutional research program the capacity to gather information periodically on the perceptions and experiences of students as well as faculty and staff is a valuable resource for institutional decision makers, particularly when that capacity is invoked on a regularized and longitudinal basis

Multiple elements of an assessment system

Another conclusion of the Commission in its report from Phase One of this project speaks to the issue of elements in an assessment system (p 30) "No single methodology provides the richness of information that an institution needs to design and implement adaptations, when appropriate, to bring about desired change in the campus climate "

The Commission's work since the publication of *Toward an Understanding of Campus Climate*, as well as that of the Stanford, Berkeley, and UCLA studies, has not only substantiated that conclusion but given comparative evidence about several methods for data gathering

The following four pages present brief descriptions of these methodological approaches that could comprise an assessment system This list is not intended to be exhaustive, instead the approaches described here have either constituted parts of existing campus climate assessment systems or were specifically mentioned in Assembly Bill 4071 Included in these descriptions are cost estimates of several of the approaches, primarily based on the completed experiences of Stanford and Berkeley as well as the continuing project at UCLA. Three caveats about these figures are important to note

1 They are estimates as contrasted to a solid, verifiable accounting of the resources expended by the institutions As such, they should be regarded as gross approximations only

2 All three universities designed and implemented comprehensive assessments of their cam puses in line with their institutional emphases on research Institutional self-assessment should be appropriate to an institution's own mission, and as such, it need not be as comprehensive or research-oriented as the studies conducted at these universities, so long as it strives to identify salient factors that influence participants' perceptions of their experiences on the campus

3 Many of the resources expended by the three institutions in their assessments could be regarded as developmental and one-time rather than recurring For example, if Stanford or UCLA were to replicate their studies in the future, they would probably utilize the same surveys that they developed for this assessment, and as such, they would not need to spend the same resources that they invested in the initial development of their surveys again

Focus groups This strategy, which the Commission used in the first phase of this study and Berke ley used in its Diversity Project involves assem bling one or more groups of campus participants to discuss their experiences at the institution with the assistance of a trained facilitator The discussion issues can either be predetermined or open-ended This approach appears to be particularly beneficial either for identifying issues to be pursued through a

mass survey or for delving into a specific set of topics with a relatively few participants, as the number of topics and participants to be included is, by definition, limited by the methodology

With respect to the costs associated with the focus-group methodology, the Commission spent approximately $29,000 to train and provide stipends to facilitators to conduct 40 focus group discussions at eight different institutions, at each of which between 60 and 70 individuals participated To include this methodology in an assessment system on one campus could cost as much as $10,000, but its precise cost would depend on the number of participants, extensiveness of the discussions, and degree of voluntary cooperation among the potential participants On the issue of cooperation, the Commission's and Berkeley's experiences were similar The individuals who were invited to participate in the focus group discussions -- be they students, faculty, or staff -- were eager to accept the invitation

Personal Interviews Personal interviews have the advantage of revealing the most intensive information of any method, although the issue of confidentiality -- a topic discussed later in this section -- is critical when implementing this approach In fact, much of this information is already available on most campuses through their counseling and advisement office, although for greatest institutional benefit, the gathering of this information would need to be systematized

The cost of collecting information from personal interviews is difficult to calculate As part of the Stanford study, Pacific Management Services interviewed 200 students for an estimated cost of $75,000 -- an estimate that includes personnel costs, travel, and overhead It may be possible to reduce those costs somewhat by having campus personnel who interview students as part of their institutional responsibilities record this information in a manner that can be retrieved for analytic purposes While less costly in direct expenditures, this strategy involves a redirection of staff time that will affect their productivity with respect to their existing and on-going institutional responsibilities

Surveys Surveys normally involve the design, distribution, and collection of a written questionnaire to prospective respondents They can be an appropriate means by which to gather information from a cross-section of the campus community in a relatively short period of time in a minimally labor-intensive fashion They may be especially valuable for identifying major areas for which further probing by other information-gathering strategies may be required

Stanford relied heavily on this survey methodology to obtain information from its student, faculty members, and staff, as noted in the previous part of this report Stanford officials estimate that the University spent approximately $265,000 for SRI International to design, distribute, collect, and analyze the results of the three surveys. To supplement these surveys, Stanford used its existing institutional research resources to compile a profile of the composition of its student body, faculty and staff ranks, and the flow of students through the University Further, it examined the course schedule and related syllabi to determine the nature and range of course content presently offered on campus

Exit Interviews AB 4071 directed the Commission to explore the feasibility of incorporating into an assessment system exit interviews with students who left school before degree completion in order to obtain information on the reasons for their presumed premature departure from the institution This approach would undoubtedly provide beneficial information to an institution because among the interviewees may be students who were sufficiently dissatisfied with the climate to leave Moreover, they are now individuals whose willingness to be candid about their experiences has been heightened by their decision to exit prematurely

However, this approach is logistically impractical Institutions seldom are aware *in advance* that students intend to leave, and, once that decision has been made, the institution has little leverage to attain cooperation from them Additionally, contacting these students by telephone or letter may be prohibitively expensive for the results obtained, although no cost estimates are available to the Commission from California institutions that have recently assessed their campus climate because none used this approach

Multiple approaches As mentioned above, the Commission believes that no one methodology is either

necessary or sufficient for assessing campus climate Of the assessments discussed in this report, the UCLA project provides the best illustration of the use of multiple approaches, in that it has so far collected information through focus groups, surveys, and open forums

During the 1989-90 academic year, the Council on Diversity organized eight focus group meetings with students who shared similar backgrounds or institutional affiliations, including members of Greek organizations, participants in racial-ethnic organizations, individuals of various sexual orientations, and students who were physically challenged. The purpose of these focus groups was to identify salient issues around which to construct a survey for campuswide distribution In addition to these meetings, the Council arranged open forums in order to provide an opportunity for any member of the campus community -- student, faculty, or staff -- to participate in this aspect of the study Interestingly, staff members in particular attended the open forums in large numbers While both the focus groups and open forums were time-consuming activities, they generated trust about the study

Based upon these focus group meetings, UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute designed three surveys -- one each for students, faculty, and staff The surveys examined campus participants' perceptions, experiences, beliefs, behaviors, attitudes, and recommendations for change, along five major dimensions related to diversity (1) race, (2) ethnicity, (3) gender, (4) sexual orientation, and (5) physical disability

UCLA's Institute for Social Science Research distributed the surveys in Fall 1990, along with a cover letter from Chancellor Young explaining that the surveys sought "to provide an empirical basis for reform efforts by systematically documenting (a) actions and policies that currently contribute to a positive climate for diversity and (b) areas of greatest concern where significant change and reform are needed "

As with the Stanford study, UCLA plans to analyze the survey responses on a total campus basis and disaggregate them along the five major diversity dimensions enumerated above Researchers of the Higher Education Research Institute anticipate that the common items on the three surveys will help develop a comprehensive and intricate picture of campus life and provide valuable information to UCLA decision makers in their examination of factors contributing to or detracting from the University's diversity goals Moreover, through the surveys UCLA is developing a capacity that will allow this rich source of information to be analyzed further by researchers and students in the future

To date, UCLA estimates its cost for its multi-faceted effort at approximately $200,000

Feasibility of linking information on campus climate with existing student performance measures

AB 4071 directed the Commission to determine the feasibility of linking information on campus climate with existing data on student performance such as grades earned and retention rates Clearly, the capacity to connect these two sources of information can provide valuable information about the relationship between perceptions or experiences and behavior or outcomes of an empirical nature Determining the extent to which such a relationship exists should be both theoretically and practically beneficial The 1987 prospectus of the University of California Student Association for legislative action concluded that the experience of "differential treatment," or the degree to which a campus' climate is perceived as inhospitable, unsupportive, and unwelcoming, often negatively affects institutions' retention and graduation rates as well as other measures of student performance That conclusion was one of the underlying reasons for the Legislature's interest through AB 4071 in assessing campus climate Therefore, the examination of the extent to which that conclusion is empirically valid is central to establishing the significance of various factors of campus climate in explaining differential rates of performance among sub-groups of students In the fifth and final section of this report the Commission recommends specific research questions that should be explored regarding the link between students' perceptions of campus climate and their academic performance

From an institutional perspective, linking these two informational sources can be one way to mobilize attention throughout the campus about its cli-

mate Faculty and staff are clearly interested in improving student performance, and, if campus climate is shown to affect that performance significantly, they will devote attention to ways of improving the climate and assessing the effects of these changes.

Establishing an empirical relationship between perceptions of campus climate and student performance will not, however, provide evidence of a *causal* connection between them nor an indication of whether performance affects perceptions or *vice versa* Rather, the ability to demonstrate a relationship between the two -- even without evidence of causality -- ought to be sufficient to energize and involve participants of a campus community as to the saliency and importance of campus climate in the institutional setting

Connecting these two information sources requires one of three strategies -- (1) linkage through a common student identifier, (2) collection of student performance information as part of an assessment instrument, or (3) correlational longitudinal analysis of the relationship between student performance and perceptions of campus climate -- as illustrated below

1 *Linkage through a common student identifier*

Quantitative information is most easily linked to perceptions of campus climate through survey methodology in that survey questionnaires could be coded with students' identification numbers that connects to an existing institutional data base containing information on their performance Other methodologies are less susceptible to this connection

While this method of linkage is clearly expedient, it has important implications with respect to candor and confidentiality Because the experiences that are explored under the rubric of campus climate are often sensitive and emotionally laden, it is essential that participants feel safe to discuss their perceptions in the assessment process The willingness of participants to reveal their feelings is directly related to their sense of confidentiality, since feelings of embarrassment, fear, and unhappiness about one's environment and one's own actions are important elements of perceived campus climate

2 *Collection of student performance information as part of an assessment instrument*

The second plausible method through which information on student performance and campus climate can be linked is the collection of data on the performance measures at the same time as the assessment indicators In effect, linkage would be achieved instantly, such as through a survey in which students are asked about their perception of the campus climate and their academic achievement at the institution in terms of grades, time-to-degree information, plans to attend graduate school, and the like

The limitation of this approach is that only a finite set of performance information could be collected and the accuracy of that information depends on student recall rather than institutional records

3 *Correlational longitudinal analysis of the relation between student performance and perceptions of campus climate*

The final strategy that an institution can implement to examine the strength of the relation between students' academic performance and their perception of campus climate is a correlational longitudinal analysis At various points in time, indices of student performance (institutional retention or graduation rates, for example) may be correlated to campus climate measures aggregated across the student cohort at the moment This correlation will reveal if changes in one set of measures occur simultaneously with change in the other To the extent that a trend is observed over time, the institution can conclude that student performance and perceptions of the campus climate are related.

While this strategy entails an attenuation of time, variations on it may be developed, including examining differences in the perceptions of students currently enrolled who are academically successful with those who are in academic difficulty

All public colleges and universities in California have information on student performance Therefore, the theoretical feasibility exists for them to connect those data with campus climate data either through the first method using a student identifier method or the third method of correlational analyses The cost of the two approaches depends in large

measure on the technological sophistication of an institution's computer capabilities, level of support for this type of institutional research, and staff analytic abilities Yet cost is only one element in the decision The need to ensure confidentiality can affect both the methods to use in the assessment and the manner in which those methods are implemented Surveying participants through a written questionnaire may be least beneficial in delving deeply into issues, even if it is the approach most likely to generate feelings of confidentiality On the other hand, focus group discussions can delve deeply into problem areas but the level of confidentiality that can be assured may be far less In other words, trade-offs between methods must be considered and methodological decisions ought to be informed by the specific purposes of the assessment -- for example, whether simply to "take the temperature of the campus" or to determine in more depth particular subtleties of the link between perceptual information on campus climate and student performance data

Feasibility of developing an assessment program that is comparable across educational systems

The final issue raised by AB 4071 is the feasibility of developing an assessment system that can provide the basis for comparisons across California's systems of higher education with respect to campus climate Of the myriad issues encountered in this study, this question of comparability has generated the most concern and the highest level of discomfort The Commission's answer to this question as posed by the Legislature is that the development of an assessment system that could yield comparable information across institutions and systems is undoubtedly feasible From the Commission's perspective, however, the more significant questions are "What is the goal of creating an assessment system?" And "How do comparisons across educational institutions and systems assist in accomplishing this goal?"

Throughout this study, the Commission has focused on the assessment of campus climate as a process that can enhance the receptivity and inclusiveness of California colleges and universities to all students -- especially women and those from historically underrepresented backgrounds -- in order that they may achieve their educational objectives As the Commission stated in its report from the first phase of the study, its view is that this process is a criterion-referenced one in which there is a standard to which institutions should strive, and institutional progress is measured by the extent to which the institution moves toward that standard over time In this view, all institutions ought to make progress toward their goals such as that of educational equity, and the extent of progress made by one institution or system should not affect the judgments of progress made by another

In addition to the substantive issues involved, this study, and those of Stanford, Berkeley, and UCLA that have served as illustrations throughout this report, indicate quite clearly that great benefits from campus climate assessment can occur at sub-institutional and institutional levels and are probably less likely at interinstitutional levels That is, each institution needs to adapt to its changing student body, and the act of institutional self-assessment provides the knowledge base for identifying the particular programs, policies, attitudes, and behaviors that support or detract from the achievement of educational equity and that therefore deserve continuation or modification Knowing the extent to which one institution compares to another appears to provide little, if any, diagnostic assistance to either institution in the change process

Moreover, institutional decision makers are sufficiently uncomfortable about the potential for comparative judgments to be made between and among campuses that this potential may actually inhibit their willingness to engage in a process that is regarded as placing the institution in a vulnerable position in the first place Therefore, while feasible, the risks of setting in place an assessment system in order to compare campuses with respect to their climates may, indeed, defeat the primary purpose of assessing a campus' climate which is to enhance its receptivity and inclusiveness

Just as individual campus participants seek guarantees with respect to their confidentiality in the assessment process, so campuses as a whole expect assurances of anonymity in a systemwide or statewide exploration of campus climate Both in Phase One of this study and in the field testing of surveys in Phase Two, the Commission committed itself to

provide confidentiality for individual participants and anonymity for involved campuses Throughout this study, particular attention has been devoted to fulfilling those commitments because of the sensitivity and sensibilities of the issues discussed and the potential for comparisons, often of an invidious and uninformed nature, between campuses These often voiced feelings provide the basis for the Commission's previous comments about the importance of ensuring confidentiality for individual participants and concern about the possibility of retrenchment from assessment that is likely to occur if institutions perceive that their anonymity will be violated through comparative analyses of campus climate

Summary and next steps

This project indicates that, while there is no one ideal or correct methodological approach to assessing campus climate, institutions should make decisions that are informed by the purposes of the assessment, institutional prerogatives and missions, and cost considerations Because one of the purposes of this study has become to provide assistance to campuses in making these decisions and, thereby, facilitating institutional willingness to engage in a campus climate assessment process, the Commission will publish a resource guide this winter that contains summaries of approximately 60 studies from California and elsewhere of the approaches that campuses have developed to assess their student life, including campus climates in some instances

That guide will also contain separate pools of survey items for students, faculty, and staff that the Commission has developed and field tested on ten campuses throughout the State during Phase Two of this study The guide describes this field testing, and it explains how these items may be used by institutions to adapt them to their own needs Through the publication of this guide, the Commission intends to both encourage institutional self-assessment and lessen the developmental costs associated with it

The Commission plans to send complimentary copies of the resource guide to every college and university in California and other interested agencies and organizations as soon as it is published.

5 *Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations*

ASSEMBLY BILL 4071 directed the Commission to conduct a study on the feasibility of developing an educational equity assessment system that could identify "the institutional policies, programs, practices, attitudes, and expectations that contribute to or detract from an equitable and high quality educational experience, particularly by women and students from historically underrepresented groups " Clearly, then, the Commission began this feasibility study with an emphasis on identifying the aspects of institutions that could be altered in order to make progress in meeting statewide educational equity goals

In the course of conducting this study, the Commission gained significant insights As a consequence, it expanded the study to be an examination of the feasibility of developing an assessment approach that can provide information on the ways in which institutional participants -- students, faculty, staff, and administrators -- experience their campus environment and the relationship between those experiences and educational equity, student flow patterns, and institutional excellence, productivity, and efficiency Ultimately, enhanced understanding of these relationships ought to lead to campuses that are more facilitative and supportive of learning for *all* individuals in an educational community -- a prerequisite for achieving the State's educational equity goals

A significant issue that AB 4071 directed the Commission to explore was the possibility of developing a statewide assessment system that would provide comparable information across institutions and sectors of the educational system While it is feasible to gather comparable information, the Commission concludes that the goal of developing an equitable and high quality educational environment would not be enhanced by such as undertaking Every campus is unique, with its own demographic dynamics, historical precedents, and "culture," and the attempt to develop a statewide assessment system, while possible, ignores these qualitative aspects of campus life Rather, the Commission has concluded that the act of institutions engaging in self-assessment of their campus climate is the most appropriate and, ultimately, most effective means by which to make progress on enhancing the educational experiences for all campus participants, especially women and Asian, Black, Latino, and Native American men

Principles underlying the Commission's conclusions and recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations that the Commission makes with respect to the assessment of campus climate are based on two principles

1 Assessment of the ways in which all participants in a postsecondary setting experience that environment addresses the core of a college or university's existence -- the teaching/learning process Moreover, a specific focus on issues of educational equity in the assessment goes to the heart of institutional inclusiveness and receptivity Therefore, for a college or university to decide that it will engage in a self-assessment of its campus climate takes an act of institutional courage and commitment Among the reasons to be courageous and make this decision is evidence that the assessment will

- Enhance understanding of the effect of its environment on learning,
- Facilitate the identification of aspects of that environment upon which to build or change to achieve institutional goals,
- Contribute to appropriately responding to the demographic changes of its student body, including identifying the changing responsibilities of the institution with respect to these

shifts and their effect on the learning process itself, and

- Chart new and exciting directions for the institution's future

In effect, self-assessment is a management tool that provides valuable information that should lead the campus to develop a more equitable and higher quality environment for all students

However, there are risks involved in making the commitment to engage in self-assessment of campus climate·

- The territory to be assessed has seldom been objectified
- Gathering information on individuals' perceptions is the primary means by which to explore campus climate, and this methodology requires assessment strategies that are unconventional
- The assessment tools may be unfamiliar, since they are not necessarily part of the methodologies traditionally available to institutional researchers.
- The results may not be entirely positive
- The findings and their implications for the campus may not easily be communicable or understood
- An appropriate institutional response to the findings may not be readily evident nor necessarily within the purview of the institution to remedy itself

Despite these risks, the Commission issues a clarion call for assessment of campus climate This call is grounded in the unshakable belief that greater knowledge about the interactions -- both planned and unintended -- that occur on campus among institutional participants directly influences the extent to which California's educational system will effectively and efficiently prepare all students, especially those from historically underrepresented backgrounds For it is these students who, in turn, will contribute to the State's future economic, social, and political health and to an improved quality of life for all residents

2 Recognizing the current State budget environment, it is unlikely that substantial new resources will be available to public institutions for these efforts for at least the next several years In the interim, the Commission finds that regular assessment of campus climate must be considered central to the core of an institution -- its instructional mission Regardless of whether new funds are available to finance expanded assessment, this issue is of such priority that institutions should redirect existing resources or become enterpreneurial in order to support these activities The publication of the Commission's Resource Guide, as well as the fact that many campuses already have activities underway, provide a basis for being optimistic that initial costs to institutions can be minimized as they develop their own assessment processes

Conclusions and recommendations

Based upon these two principles, the Commission offers the following nine conclusions and recommendations -- the first seven to postsecondary institutions themselves and to their students, faculty, staff, and administrators, the eighth to California's educational leaders, and the ninth to the Statewide offices of California's higher education sectors

1. Institutional self-assessment of campus climate

Conclusion 1 It is feasible to assess campus climate, or the formal and informal environment.-- both institutionally and community-based -- in which individuals learn, teach, work, and live in a postsecondary setting Moreover, it is possible to identify the factors that institutional participants perceive as contributing to, or detracting from, achievement in that environment This statewide project, which involved 18 campuses throughout its two phases, and the studies conducted at major campuses throughout the State -- most notably Stanford, UCLA, and Berkeley - demonstrate this feasibility

Recommendation 1: Every California college and university should plan, develop, and implement an assessment of its campus climate that is appropriate to its own institutional mission and values.

Assessments planned and conducted by each postsecondary institution of its climate holds the greatest potential for understanding and objectifying the experiences of institutional participants as revealed through their perceptions This increased understanding is the first step in developing campuses that are both equitable and high quality educational environments -- a goal that ought to be integral to the educational mission of all institutions

As such, institutions have the responsibility to engage in self-assessment of their campus climate which can be expected to be a management tool that benefits the college or university in several ways

- To accelerate progress in fulfilling their mission,
- To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the climate and, based on that identification, modify policies, programs, or practices, as appropriate, to achieve desired objectives,
- To achieve educational equity by revealing variations, if any, in the experiences of institutional participants from different racial-ethnic backgrounds and those between men and women, and,
- To inform the institution's self-study that is part of an accreditation process

Recommendations 2 through 7 are specific actions that colleges and universities should undertake in order to implement this general recommendation

2. The assessment process

Conclusion 2 No ideal process exists for assessing campus climate, but the process by which an institution engages in an assessment of its climate is as important -- if not more so -- than the results produced While the leadership of the institution may initiate the assessment, the process holds the key to its potential for bringing about desired change in the campus climate for several reasons

- The process can create psychological ownership among institutional participants and diffuse the occasions for divisiveness that may occur from the assessment,
- The process can focus energy and thought of the educational community on its climate -- a part of the environment that seldom holds the attention of institutional participants, and,
- Profound collective and individual insights can emerge from the assessment process -- insights that may contribute to change in attitudes and behaviors

Recommendation 2: Every college or university should develop an inclusive assessment process, with clearly stated and agreed-upon objectives.

An inclusive process has the following characteristics

- Active involvement of all groups on campus, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators, at each stage in the assessment Additionally, each of these groups should be inclusive of the diversity on campus with respect to gender, race, ethnicity, home department, longevity on campus, and other factors of significance,
- A willingness to be consultative and seek advice from all constituencies of the campus community as a whole,
- A mechanism for soliciting advice that is deliberative, including perhaps the establishment of an advisory council or committee, and,
- A spirit of openness, especially to the multiplicity of voices at the institution

With respect to the objectives, at an early stage in the process, the assessment's goals and timelines for achieving them should be developed through a consensus-building process The goals and timelines should be widely published on campus in order that the community as a whole knows that the assessment is occurring, the expectations that are motivating it, the process by which individuals can become involved, and the ways in which the results will contribute to enhancement of campus life for all participants This openness should encourage engagement in the process and generate a receptiv-

ity to adaptations, if any, that are indicated by an analysis of the findings

3. Assessment topics

Conclusion 3 Campus climate is a complex and multi-faceted concept Virtually every and all aspects of the collegiate environment comprise the climate It follows, then, that to gain insights into the experiences of institutional participants will require a comprehensive examination of the myriad dimensions -- both institutionally and community-based -- that, together, constitute that climate

Recommendation 3: Every college or university should develop an assessment that is comprehensive and inclusive with respect to the multiplicity of factors that comprise its campus climate.

The Commission's study defined its universe of factors as

- Curriculum content and pedagogical approaches,
- Faculty composition and philosophy,
- Student-faculty interaction,
- Academic support service availability,
- Student life,
- Interactions among students,
- Campus image,
- Student expectation of the campus prior to enrollment,
- Campus leaders' philosophy and implementing practices, and,
- Campus-local community interaction

Because campuses vary, each should determine, as part of its assessment process, which factors are most relevant for covering the range of experiences encountered by its institutional participants The crucial point is that the campus should seek to include as many factors as possible in its assessment, especially information on curriculum content and pedagogical approaches which are central to the teaching-learning process

4. Assessment participants

Conclusion 4 To develop the most comprehensive picture possible of an institution's climate involves gathering information on the experiences from at least groups of students, faculty, staff, and administrators Each of these groups perceives the campus from their own unique perspectives Moreover, the experiences, views, and attitudes that each brings is part of the fabric of the institution and contributes to the essence of the campus climate

Recommendation 4: Every college or university should include in its assessment the experiences of students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

The perceptions and experiences of all the various constituencies within an institution are essential to the development of a comprehensive picture of a campus Moreover, within each constituent group, there should be significant representation of individuals from various racial-ethnic backgrounds as well as both women and men Only in this way will the campus leadership be able to respond effectively and comprehensively to the findings and build upon the positive aspects and alter the negative aspects of its campus climate

5. Assessment methodologies

Conclusion 5 No single methodology provides the richness of information that an institution needs to develop a comprehensive picture of its campus climate Issues of complexity exist in institutional self-assessment of campus climate Utilization of an array of methodologies is essential if

- Institutional policy-makers are to enhance the collegiate environment for all participants,
- Various aspects of the climate are to be explored separately or in combination, and,
- Sensitive measurements are to be taken that are diagnostic in nature

Recommendation 5: Every college or university should develop an assessment approach that will provide comprehensive information on its campus climate.

Utilization of a multiplicity of methodologies will contribute to the development of a comprehensive picture with respect to the campus climate and should provide the information needed by institutional decision-makers to intervene, if appropriate, to alter participants' experiences Among the methodologies that a campus should consider in building its assessment system are survey research, interviews in groups or individual settings, forum discussions, exit interviews, and participant-observation analyses The Commission expects that the Resource Guide that it will be publishing this Winter will assist institutions in making decisions about those methodologies which may be most appropriate for their particular situation

The specific methodologies incorporated into an institution's system should be predicated on the specific purposes for which an assessment is being conducted and the system should be sufficiently flexible to be modified, if different purposes arise For example, administration of a survey might be an appropriate means by which to "take the temperature" of a climate However, to develop a "diagnosis" and prescribe a treatment plan, to use a medical metaphor, might necessitate the establishment of an "exit interview" policy, the initiation of group discussions focused on issues revealed as problematic in the analysis of survey instrument responses, or other information-gathering techniques, as appropriate

Additionally, a decision of which methodologies to incorporate into an assessment system should be informed by considerations of confidentiality An examination of individuals' experiences in an institutional setting is a topic of great sensitivity and the degree to which participants feel comfortable and safe in revealing them will influence the usefulness and richness of information provided Strengths and weaknesses exist with each methodology that a campus might consider incorporating into its system However, the extent to which a particular methodology impacts on the assurances of confidentiality to be provided to participants ought to be a major consideration in a decision to include or exclude it from an assessment system

6. Assessment schedules

Conclusion 6 Regular assessments of campus climate are essential for three reasons

- A campus community, particularly its student body, changes constantly and, as such, so might the experiences and perceptions of its participants Periodic assessment will provide institutional decision-makers with information upon which to respond to these changes in a timely fashion,
- A longitudinal assessment will provide information on the extent to which interventions designed to alter the campus climate are effective,
- A cyclical assessment plan may identify serendipitious outcomes that affect the experiences of institutional participants and upon which the campus may wish to build or modify.

Recommendation 6: A college or university should conduct an assessment of its campus climate on a periodic, cyclical, and longitudinal basis.

While the Commission is not recommending a prescribed schedule to be followed by every campus, assessment of campus climate should be on-going and integrated into the fabric of the institution's normal process of self-study For certain aspects of the climate -- residential experiences or student-faculty interactions, for example -- the assessment should be continuous, perhaps once a year For other facets -- curricular or pedagogical changes and relations between the campus and surrounding community, for instance -- the length of time that it takes for changes to be visible may be significantly longer The schedule should be appropriate to the particular aspect of the climate that is of interest at that time The critical issue, however, is that a plan should be developed whereby the key aspects of the campus climate are assessed on a regular basis in order to function as a management tool that informs decision-makers about the experiential nature of participation at the college or university

7. Assessment analyses

Conclusion 7 Campus climate assessment is ideally suited to be predicated on measurement of change over time toward institutionally agreed upon standards or goals With respect to this conclusion, the designated standard ought to be that each college or university embrace continual institutional change so that there is movement in the di-

rection of creating campus climates that are increasingly welcoming, supportive, and hospitable for all students, faculty, staff, and administrators, especially all women and those men from backgrounds historically underrepresented in postsecondary education

Recommendation 7: Information from the assessment should be analyzed to determine the extent to which progress has been made in developing an equitable and high quality educational environment.

In a sense, this recommendation calls for assessment that is criterion-referenced in nature That is, the measurement should be against a designated standard of performance rather than against the performance of others This type of assessment focuses on the measurement of change over time on a campus and is characterized by

- approaching the need for change on the basis of institutional pride and responsibility,
- promoting the establishment of realistic benchmarks by which to measure progress, and,
- encouraging an examination of the climate that is diagnostic rather than summative in nature

In measuring movement toward this standard, particular attention should be directed at identifying the extent to which variations exist in perceptions of the campus climate among individuals from various groups, including those characterized by racial-ethnic and gender differences This type of analyses will enable a college or university to discern whether a particular perception is one generally held on campus, or one which is group-specific, or one which is idiosyncratic to an individual -- information beneficial in determining an appropriate course of action and in assessing progress in achieving educational equity

8. Statewide policy on assessment of campus climate

Conclusion 8 While the responsibility for assessing campus climate rests squarely with individual institutions, the State's education leaders -- members of governing board, chief executive officers, officers of academic senates, and members of professional associations, among others – can play a facilitative role by establishing this activity as a high priority

A discussion by them of the relationship between campus climate assessment and institutional effectiveness, measured in terms of retention and graduation rates for example, may encourage campus administrators to engage in this process

Recommendation 8: The State's higher education leaders should establish a policy and develop incentives, as appropriate and necessary, that encourages colleges and universities to conduct self-assessments of their campus climate on a periodic basis.

A declaration of policy, developed in consultation with campus representatives, by statewide educational leaders about the importance of assessing campus climate should address

- Benefits to an institution from such an assessment,
- The necessity for involvement in an assessment process by the various divisions on a campus -- academic, business, and student affairs,
- The relationship between assessment of campus climate and the self-study process of accreditation,
- Potential sources of funding for conducting the assessment, and
- A commitment from the statewide office to provide technical assistance, if requested, in the assessment

While respecting the autonomy of the institutions that comprise its organization, the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (AICCU) should join with its public sector counterparts in promoting and stimulating the need for institutional self-assessment of campus climate

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) provides an example of the importance of leadership in this area Through its adoption of new accreditation standards and its continuing efforts with respect to issues of diversity, campuses have been encouraged to include the assessment of campus climate as part of their self-study process

9. Encouraging progress in assessing campus climate

Conclusion 9 The campus climate that individuals encounter influences their educational journeys

and reflects on the extent to which institutions are effective -- a goal of the State As such, policymakers at the State level have an interest in encouraging campuses to be as facilitative of learning as possible and in charting their progress in achieving that goal Institutional self-assessment provides the prism through which such charting can occur

Recommendation 9: The statewide offices of the higher education sectors should develop a plan to inform the State of their progress in implementing the recommendations from this study. By January 1, 1993, these plans should be submitted to the California Postsecondary Education Commission. On the basis of the schedules described in these plans, the Commission will prepare an analysis of progress made in implementing self-assessments of campus climate throughout California for the Governor and Legislature.

Each statewide office of the higher educational sectors should prepare a plan describing the manner by which it will inform the Commission of the progress of its campuses in implementing the recommendations from this study Additionally, the plans should include a schedule for informing the Commission of this progress and the type of information that these periodic reports will contain As in the above recommendation, AICCU, while recognizing the autonomy of its institutions, should join the statewide offices of the public higher education sectors, as appropriate, in informing the Commission on progress of its membership in implementing the recommendations from this study

The focus of the Commission's interest in this monitoring process will be on the manner in which institutions are assessing their climates and not on the specific results of those assessments Over time, the Commission may request that information be provided on the extent to which campuses are making progress in developing equitable and high quality educational environments as perceived by institutional participants, in general, and participants from historically underrepresented backgrounds, in particular

Future directions

The Commission anticipates that its activities with respect to campus climate and its assessment will continue in the future Specifically, the Commission expects to

1 Complete and publish the Resource Guide discussed in the preceding section,

2 Continue its work with wasc, both in terms of contributing to the document that it is preparing on diversity and assisting institutions to incorporate assessments of their campus climate in the accreditation self-study process,

3 Collaborate with the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) in its Institute on Campus Diversity This institute is designed to conduct workshops for teams of participants from campuses that will lead to the development of plans that are responsive to an increasingly diverse student body WICHE has invited Commission staff to join in planning these workshops and expects to use the Resource Guide and pool of items developed in this study as part of the workshop curriculum, and,

4 Engage in extramural research on campus climate This research will explore several issues related to campus climate, including

- The relationship between perceptions of campus climate and student behavior, particularly as that behavior is reflected in quantitative measures of performance, such as retention and graduation rates, decisions to pursue further postsecondary educational studies, and intentions to choose careers in academia In this research, particular attention will be directed at investigating these relationships as they reflect on achievement of educational equity goals for groups of students from various racial-ethnic backgrounds
- The degree of congruency between the perceptions of students, faculty, staff, and administrators on a campus with respect to its climate, and,
- The extent to which groups of institutional

participants hold similar perceptions about the campus climate and the extent to which there are group differences in perceptions that are related to racial, ethnic, and gender characteristics

The Commission anticipates that these activities will serve to encourage and facilitate institutional self-assessment of campus climate -- the first step in creating equitable and high quality educational environments for all students, especially women and Asian, Black, Latino, and Native American men The importance to California's economic, social, and political future of succeeding in this endeavor was best summarized by a faculty member who participated in the first phase of this study "To a degree, you have a number of students, White and Black, that isolate themselves But one of the things you find is that the same people that you see on this campus today, you're going to meet in the business world tomorrow One of those might be your supervisor, no matter whether they are Black, White, Asian, or whatever And the thing to do is to try to get students to begin to think in terms of not loving the other person in the classroom, but to insure that there is a respect, there is a sense that you're here, you're on a journey together, and you ought to learn from each other "

Appendix A

Assembly Bill No. 4071

CHAPTER 690

An act to add Article 3 (commencing with Section 66915) to Chapter 11 of Part 40 of the Education Code, relating to education, and making an appropriation therefor

[Approved by Governor August 28, 1988. Filed with Secretary of State August 29, 1988.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 4071, Vasconcellos. Postsecondary education

Under existing law, the California Postsecondary Education Commission is vested with various duties and responsibilities regarding higher education.

This bill would require the commission to develop an assessment of the feasibility and present possible options for identifying and addressing educational equity at the University of California, California State University, and the California Community Colleges. The bill would define "educational equity" and "multicultural success" for purposes of the bill.

This bill would require that the California Postsecondary Education Commission report to the Governor and the Legislature on or before January 1, 1990, detailing the results of this study and recommendations for implementation of state policy to achieve the intent of this bill.

This bill would appropriate $50,000 to the California Postsecondary Education Commission for the purposes of the bill.

Appropriation: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Article 3 (commencing with Section 66915) is added to Chapter 11 of Part 40 of the Education Code, to read:

Article 3. Higher Education Equity Assessment Act of 1988

66915. As used in this article:

(a) "Educational equity" means the development and maintenance of institutional policies, programs, practices, attitudes, and expectations, that are conducive to, and serve to encourage, the achievement of appropriate educational goals by all students at the institution, in particular women and students from minority groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

(b) "Multicultural success" means the development, within each student attending public higher educational institutions, of various dimensions and capacities that are essential for living, working, and

Corrected 8-16-88

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contributing successfully in a multiracial and multicultural society, including a personal familiarity, sensitization, and comfort with other cultures

66916 The Legislature finds and declares all of the following

(a) The State of California has and operates the premier system of public higher education in the entire world

(b) By the year 2002, the State of California will become the first state in the continental United States with no racial majority, wherein Latinos will constitute 33 percent, Asians 12 percent, Blacks 9 percent, and Anglos 46 percent of our total population

(c) The State of California, therefore, has the opportunity and the challenge to create the world's first truly healthy multicultural state and society

(d) Given the growing multicultural diversity of postsecondary educational institutions, the State of California has a fundamental interest in demanding institutional accountability on questions of educational equity

(e) Future success in adapting to the growing diversity of the state's population will depend, in part, on the development of multiple measures of the level of educational equity and the degree of multicultural success being provided in California's postsecondary educational institutions

(f) A primary goal of every educational institution should be to ensure an equitable educational environment for each student, regardless of gender or race

(g) A primary measure of the effectiveness of a postsecondary education institution should be its success in providing an equitable educational environment for its students

(h) Institutions of higher education currently have few if any systematic measures for evaluating the extent to which an equitable educational environment is being provided for students generally

(i) Most existing measures of equity in higher education focus on numerical data, such as application, admission, and graduation rates. These measures provide a quantitative indication of what is happening to underrepresented students who aspire to postsecondary degrees, but provide almost no information on the reasons why some students achieve their educational objectives and others do not

(j) The purposes of this article are to do the following

(1) Determine and assess the obstacles, practices, programs, and attitudes, both personal and institutional, which serve to deter women and minority students from traditionally underrepresented groups from fully realizing their educational potential during their tenure at postsecondary educational institutions

(2) Develop standard qualitative techniques for assessing educational equity, such as student and faculty surveys on questions of differential treatment and educational equity, as well as exit interviews with students leaving school before degree completion

These techniques can provide important information explaining the causes of changes in student performance as measured through application, admission, and graduation rates This information also can be utilized for purposes of intercampus and intersegmental comparisons of the perceived levels of educational equity being provided for students.

66917. The California Postsecondary Education Commission, after consulting with students, faculty, staff, and administrators from, and members of the governing boards of, the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges, shall develop an assessment of the feasibility and present possible options for all of the following

(a) A program of systematic longitudinal data collection utilizing information obtained through surveys of students and faculty, focusing on the relative significance of various factors that contribute or detract from an equitable and high quality educational experience, particularly by women and students from historically underrepresented groups. Of special importance are factors influencing the perceived level of equity being provided in students' educational experiences This data collection program may specifically examine, but need not be limited to, the following factors:

(1) The quantity and quality of student-faculty classroom interaction.

(2) The quantity and quality of student-faculty contact in academic advising.

(3) The nature of student-faculty academic interaction.

(4) The quantity and quality of academic and social interactions between students

(5) The quantity and quality of advising provided to community college students who aspire to transfer into four-year institutions

(6) The level and source of faculty support provided to students in graduate and professional programs

(7) The level of departmental support provided to students in graduate and professional programs

(8) The extent to which educational expenses, including the level of student loan indebtedness, have influenced students academic and professional career choices

(b) A program of longitudinal data collection utilizing information obtained through exit interviews with students leaving school prior to degree completion These interviews may focus on assessing the relative significance of the various factors contributing to the decision to leave school, as well as other factors relating to the quality and equity of students educational experiences

(c) A program to link data obtained through the above-described programs with existing numerical data including, but not limited to, applicant, admissions, and retention statistics for the purpose of identifying and evaluating all of the following

(1) The underlying causes of student attrition.

(2) Changes in student performance as measured through applicant, admission, and graduation rates

(3) Intercampus and intersegmental comparisons of the perceived levels of educational quality and equity being provided for students

(4) The likely effectiveness of existing and proposed affirmative action programs, equal opportunity programs, women's reentry programs, special admissions support, and outreach programs

(5) Institutional policies and practices designed to address primary student concerns and to ensure an equitable educational environment at these institutions

(d) An examination of the feasibility of developing the above-described programs so that data will be comparable between the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges.

(e) An estimate of the resources each segment would need to implement the proposed data collection mechanism

66918. The California Postsecondary Education Commission shall submit a report to the Governor and Legislature on or before January 1, 1990, detailing the results of this study and recommendations for implementation of state policy to achieve the intent of this article.

66919. The sum of fifty thousand dollars ($50,000) is hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the California Postsecondary Education Commission for the purposes of the funding of Article 3 (commencing with Section 66915) of Chapter 11 of Part 40 of the Education Code.

Appendix B

THE FOLLOWING material summarizes the findings of the Stanford and Berkeley studies of campus climate described in this report.

Stanford University

This Stanford report revealed the following perceptions held by students, faculty, and staff who comprised the Stanford community in the late 1980s

- Opportunities to learn about various racial and ethnic groups that constitute the populace of the United States and their contributions to this society were inadequate in the undergraduate curriculum
- Although both the number and the racial-ethnic diversity of the students in ethnic studies courses increased in recent years, only a small percentage of undergraduates enrolled in these classes Students from historically underrepresented backgrounds were more likely to enroll than were White students, and they were most likely to take courses concerning their particular group
- A large majority of faculty from historically underrepresented backgrounds and most White teachers agreed that more courses were needed that discuss Asian, Black, Latino, and Native American history, traditions, and contributions, particularly to the United States, as well as issues that affect these groups
- Over the past two decades, the efforts to recruit and retain faculty from historically underrepresented backgrounds had met with some success, as their numbers almost doubled in tenure-line positions and almost tripled in tenured positions, but the number of faculty from these backgrounds who were retained was disturbingly low
- Various faculty groups perceived the professional, academic, and social environment differently All faculty overwhelmingly agreed that the University should promote racial and ethnic understanding, but faculty from historically underrepresented backgrounds were more skeptical than White faculty about the depth of the administration's commitment and more likely to feel that not enough was being done about this issue
- Faculty from various backgrounds interacted professionally on committees but less in research and teaching -- their main academic roles
- Most faculty members did not perceive that discrimination was a major reason for the social and professional distance between groups. Rather, social and professional interactions were limited by lack of opportunity resulting from the relatively small numbers of faculty from historically underrepresented backgrounds
- The contributions of faculty from historically underrepresented backgrounds were generally acknowledged and valued The faculty consistently rated the scholarship and teaching of their colleagues from these backgrounds as average or above average Nonetheless, faculty from diverse backgrounds were generally less satisfied than White faculty with their career development due, in large part, to the lack of clarity about expectations, inadequate guidance and mentoring, and an insufficient level of understanding about their work
- Many faculty from historically underrepresented backgrounds had less time available for research and scholarship than their White colleagues Because they were few in number and because of the growing number of students from similar backgrounds, these faculty carried a heavy load of formal and informal advising Moreover, these faculty were asked to participate in many administrative and University services -- services that are intended to better integrate individuals from diverse backgrounds into the University's decision-making process
- Large percentages of students from historically underrepresented backgrounds believed that racial stereotyping had influenced their interaction with faculty

- Significant differences did not exist in graduation rates between students from historically underrepresented backgrounds and White students However, academic performance was often hampered by erosion of self-confidence and pressures outside the classroom felt by students from historically underrepresented backgrounds with respect to balancing academic and non-academic activities
- Students from diverse backgrounds commonly socialize together and form interracial friendships, yet demonstrate considerable lack of understanding about each other In fact, students from all racial and ethnic groups expressed disappointment at the level of understanding among individuals on campus from different backgrounds
- Students from historically underrepresented backgrounds reported that subtle forms of prejudice and devaluation were common, including stereotyping that questioned their academic qualifications and were reflected in offensive jokes.
- Diversity in personal style, expressiveness, critical thinking, and cultural perspective was incorporated into working relationships in some offices However, in most work environments, traditional mores dominated, stereotypes abounded, and staff interaction was frequently awkward As a result, staff from Asian, Black, Latino, and Native American backgrounds faced limited access to better jobs and significant career uncertainty
- There existed a "glass ceiling" preventing professional advancement by staff from historically underrepresented backgrounds
- Institutional racism describes a pattern of unintentionally prejudicial behaviors and habits that were evident in standard University language, pressures to conform, and prevalence of stereotypes in the workplace One of the most pernicious, and unsubstantiated, stereotypes was that staff from different racial-ethnic groups had different aspirations than their White colleagues and that they were not as devoted to the institution
- Feelings of marginalization often occurred when staff from historically underrepresented backgrounds were not consistently included as full partners in professional development
- Staff from historically underrepresented backgrounds felt that White managers lacked sensitivity to their concerns, often perpetuated stereotypes, and failed to mentor them in career development

University of California, Berkeley

Berkeley's Diversity Project focused on the student voice and "how the highly variable make-up of students at Berkeley affected their educational and social experiences." The findings that emerged from the project are as follows

- Students were ambivalent and contradictory with respect to racial-ethnic diversity and this ambivalence was reflected both among groups and within the same individual Moreover, the nature of the ambivalence differed based upon the race and ethnicity of the student
  - -- White students viewed the affirmative action policy aspect of diversity as a zero-sum concept in which they would lose, however, when viewed outside of affirmative action, these same students believed that the diversity of the campus would enrich their lives and enhance their capacity to participate in the "real" world
  - -- Asians were the most ambivalent of the groups and many viewed the affirmative action admissions policy as antithetical to their interests
  - -- Students from all historically underrepresented groups were most supportive of the affirmative action admissions policy, but they regarded that policy as resulting in a hostle reaction to their presence on campus by students from other groups

  However, while students of all racial-ethnic backgrounds were "deeply conflicted, disturbed, divided, and confused about Affirmative action as a policy", they supported the idea of diversity
- The affirmative action admissions policy -- while seldom understood by students -- was often the basis for initial impressions formed by students

from racial-ethnic groups other than their own Issues of fairness, merit, entitlement became reified through the admissions policy and created a conception of which students were enrolled on the campus legitimately or illegitimately

- Students became acclimated to the campus primarily through affinity groups, although the nature of those groups varied by students' racial-ethnic background.
  - -- Undergraduates from historically underrepresented backgrounds tended to associate, upon arrival, in groups composed of students from their same background That is, balkanization of ethnic enclaves were present and served the purpose of creating friendships and study groups
  - -- White students tended to develop associations based upon common interests, such as band, political organizations, etc

    Over time, the nature of these associations changed for most students

- Since the establishment of laws eliminating overt discrimination, the nature of discrimination has changed to a more subtle, covert pattern of behavior As a consequence, the language used to describe this more subtle behavior that communicates disrespect and questioning of legitimacy is imprecise and unclear Students were inarticulate about the nature of the racism and discomfort that they felt on campus, but enraged by its existence
- An "accordion effect" was noted among students from different racial-ethnic backgrounds That is, a student tended to view students from other racial-ethnic groups as more similar to each other than they saw themselves For example, students who are not Asian perceive all Asians similarly, while Asians saw dramatic differences in the Asian community on campus. The same was true for Black students or Latinos The discerned level of variation was a function of the similarity between the perceiver and the perceived in terms of racial-ethnic background

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CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION

THE California Postsecondary Education Commission is a citizen board established in 1974 by the Legislature and Governor to coordinate the efforts of California's colleges and universities and to provide independent, non-partisan policy analysis and recommendations to the Governor and Legislature

Members of the Commission

The Commission consists of 17 members Nine represent the general public, with three each appointed for six-year terms by the Governor, the Senate Rules Committee, and the Speaker of the Assembly Six others represent the major segments of postsecondary education in California Two student members are appointed by the Governor

As of February 1995, the Commissioners representing the general public are

Henry Der, San Francisco, *Chair*
C Thomas Dean, Long Beach
Elaine Alquist, Santa Clara
Mim Andelson, Los Angeles
Jeffrey I Marston, San Diego
Guillermo Rodriguez, Jr , San Francisco, *Vice Chair*
Melinda G Wilson, Torrance
Linda J Wong, Los Angeles
Ellen F Wright, Saratoga

Representatives of the segments are

Roy T Brophy, Fair Oaks, appointed by the Regents of the University of California,

Yvonne W Larsen, San Diego, appointed by the California State Board of Education,

Alice Petrossian, Glendale, appointed by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges,

Ted J Saenger, San Francisco, appointed by the Trustees of the California State University, and

Kyhl Smeby, Pasadena, appointed by the Governor to represent California's independent colleges and universities, and

vacant, representing the Council for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education

The two student representatives are

Stephen Lesher, Meadow Vista
Beverly A Sandeen, Costa Mesa

Functions of the Commission

The Commission is charged by the Legislature and Governor to "assure the effective utilization of public postsecondary education resources, thereby eliminating waste and unnecessary duplication, and to promote diversity, innovation, and responsiveness to student and societal needs "

To this end, the Commission conducts independent reviews of matters affecting the 2,600 institutions of postsecondary education in California, including community colleges, four-year colleges, universities, and professional and occupational schools

As an advisory body to the Legislature and Governor, the Commission does not govern or administer any institutions, nor does it approve, authorize, or accredit any of them Instead, it performs its specific duties of planning, evaluation, and coordination by cooperating with other State agencies and non-governmental groups that perform those other governing, administrative, and assessment functions

Operation of the Commission

The Commission holds regular meetings throughout the year at which it debates and takes action on staff studies and takes positions on proposed legislation affecting education beyond the high school in California By law, its meetings are open to the public Requests to speak at a meeting may be made by writing the Commission in advance or by submitting a request before the start of the meeting

The Commission's day-to-day work is carried out by its staff in Sacramento, under the guidance of its executive director, Warren Halsey Fox, Ph D , who is appointed by the Commission

Further information about the Commission and its publications may be obtained from the Commission offices at 1303 J Street, Suite 500, Sacramento, California 98514-2938, telephone (916) 445-7933 or Calnet 485-7933, FAX (916) 327-4417

ASSESSING CAMPUS CLIMATE
Feasibility of Developing an Educational Equity Assessment System
California Postsecondary Education Commission Report 92-2

ONE of a series of reports published by the Commission as part of its planning and coordinating responsibilities Additional copies may be obtained without charge from the Publications Office, California Postsecondary Education Commission, Third Floor, 1020 Twelfth Street, Sacramento, California 95814-3985

Recent reports of the Commission include

91-5 Status Report on Human Corps Activities, 1991 The Fourth in a Series of Five Annual Reports to the Legislature in Response to Assembly Bill 1829 (Chapter 1245, Statutes of 1987) (April 1991)

91-6 The State's Reliance on Non-Governmental Accreditation, Part Two A Report to the Legislature in Response to Assembly Bill 1993 (Chapter 1324, Statutes of 1989) (April 1991)

91-7 State Policy on Technology for Distance Learning Recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor in Response to Senate Bill 1202 (Chapter 1038, Statutes of 1989) (April 1991)

91-8 The Educational Equity Plan of the California Maritime Academy A Report to the Legislature in Response to Language in the Supplemental Report of the 1990-91 Budget Act (April 1991)

91-9 The California Maritime Academy and the California State University A Report to the Legislature and the Department of Finance in Response to Supplemental Report Language of the 1990 Budget Act (April 1991)

91-10 Faculty Salaries in California's Public Universities, 1991-92 A Report to the Legislature and Governor in Response to Senate Concurrent Resolution No 51 (1965) (April 1991)

91-11 Updated Community College Transfer Student Statistics, Fall 1990 and Full-Year 1989-90 A Staff Report to the California Postsecondary Education Commission (April 1991)

91-12 Academic Program Evaluation in California, 1989-90 The Commission's Fifteenth Annual Report on Program Planning, Approval, and Review Activities (September 1991)

91-13 California's Capacity to Prepare Registered Nurses A Preliminary Inquiry Prepared for the Legislature in Response to Assembly Bill 1055 (Chapter 924, Statutes of 1990) (September 1991)

91-14 Supplemental Report on Academic Salaries, 1990-91 A Report to the Governor and Legislature in Response to Senate Concurrent Resolution No 51 (1965) and Supplemental Language to the 1979, 1981, and 1990 Budget Acts (September 1991)

91-15 Approval of Las Positas College in Livermore A Report to the Governor and Legislature on the Development of Las Positas College -- Formerly the Livermore Education Center of Chabot College (September 1991)

91-16 Update on Long-Range Planning Activities Report of the Executive Director, September 16, 1991 (September 1991)

91-17 The Role, Structure, and Operation of the Commission A Preliminary Response to Senate Bill 2374 (October 1991)

91-18 1991-92 Plan of Work for the California Postsecondary Education Commission Major Studies and Other Commission Activities (October 1991)

91-19 Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as Amended A Report to California's Congressional Delegation Summarizing Consensus in California's Higher Education Community Regarding Proposed Revisions of the Act (December 1991)

91-20 Student Fees, Access, and Quality Prospects and Issues for the 1992-93 Budget Process (December 1991)

91-21 Legislative and State Budget Priorities of the Commission, 1992 A Report of the California Postsecondary Education Commission (December 1991)

91-22 Proposed Construction of the Western Nevada County Center, Sierra Joint Community College District: A Report to the Governor and Legislature in Response to a Request for Capital Funds for a Permanent Off-Campus Center in the Grass Valley/Nevada City Area (December 1991)

92-1 Final Report on the Effectiveness of Intersegmental Student Preparation Programs The Third Report to the Legislature in Response to Item 6420-0011-001 of the 1988-89 Budget Act (January 1992)

92-2 Assessing Campus Climate Feasibility of Developing an Educational Equity Assessment System (January 1992)

92-3 California's Joint Doctoral Programs A Report on Doctoral Programs Offered by Campuses of the California State University with Campuses of the University of California and the Claremont Graduate School (January 1992)

92-4 Prospects for Long-Range Capital Planning in California Public Higher Education A Preliminary Review A Staff Report to the California Postsecondary Education Commission (January 1992)